

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS COMMITTEE
MONDAY, MARCH 24, 2014
6:00 PM**

ATTENDANCE: Co-chair Vizzo-Paniccia; Co-chair Swain; Council members: Banta, Feliciano, Halstead

NON-COMMITTEE: Council member Salter

CITY STAFF: Erin McDonough; Special Projects Manager, CAO's Office
V. Jones, Tax Collector

Co-chair Vizzo-Paniccia called the meeting to order at 6:17 pm.

She stated the council members that were present and their respective district.

Approval of Committee Meeting Minutes of February 24, 2014.

**** CO-CHAIR SWAIN MOVED TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER FELICIANO SECONDED**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

Co-chair Vizzo-Paniccia stated that the agenda would be taken out of order, to take up the commission appointments first.

31-13 Appointment of Thi Nguyen (U) to the WPCA Commission.

Co-chair Vizzo-Paniccia stated that the appointee wasn't able to attend the meeting. She polled the committee to ask how they wanted to proceed, noting that this was the second postponement. The committee members agreed to extend a third invitation to the appointee for the next scheduled meeting.

**** CO-CHAIR SWAIN MOVED TO TABLE 31-13 FOR THE PURPOSE OF
EXTENDING A THIRD REQUEST FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF THI
NGUYEN (U) TO THE WPCA COMMISSION**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BANTA SECONDED**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

43-13 Appointment of Carlos A. Moreno (D) to the Planning & Zoning Commission.

The appointee, Carlos Moreno approached the committee.

Co-chair Vizzo-Paniccia distributed the appointee's background information for review. She relayed that the appointee should address the committee about his strengths, his commitment to serving on the commission and his background.

She noted that the committee members would then ask the appointee questions. And following the meeting, the item would be passed onto the full city council for a vote and he will receive a training packet.

Mr. Moreno stated that he resided at 405 Westfield Avenue, noting that he has been a resident of Bridgeport for forty-four years. He relayed that he loved Bridgeport and that all of his children were born here. He said he has two boys and one girl in their early to mid thirties and five grandchildren that attend Bridgeport schools. He is currently employed at Aptar Manufacturing located in Stratford that manufactures fragrance pumps. He further relayed that he has been employed at Aptar Manufacturing for five years and prior to this; he was employed at Elizabeth Arden in Stamford as a quality control supervisor. He mentioned that in his spare time, he enjoys sports.

He went on to express that he is excited about the growth and changes that are taking place in the downtown area and he is looking to help better Bridgeport. He further expressed that he was encouraged about the people from neighboring towns coming into Bridgeport.

Co-chair Vizzo-Paniccia asked Mr. Moreno about his commitment to serving on the Planning & Zoning Commission; in terms of being available to inspect and check on properties for applications that come forward. Mr. Moreno said he wouldn't have any problem with visiting the properties. He also noted that he has the flexibility to attend meetings regularly.

Co-chair Swain mentioned that his information indicated that he would be replacing Joe Tiago. Mr. Moreno responded that that was correct and he commented that he had an idea what is involved in serving on the Planning & Zoning Commission. He added that he was a good friend of Joe Tiago.

Co-chair Swain asked Mr. Moreno how he was approached to serve on the Planning & Zoning Commission. Mr. Moreno said he was approached by Mr. Tiago initially and then he spoke to Adam; the Mayors Aide about the appointment.

Co-chair Vizzo-Paniccia questioned why Mr. Moreno's paperwork was dated a year ago. Ms. McDonough explained that it's generally the time span to process the paperwork. She noted that the best case scenario to process paperwork is six months due to the application having to be submitted to Internal Affairs; Ethics Commission; City Council; Miscellaneous Matters Committee and Public Safety Committee and then it needs to go back before the City Council and then they have to wait for the appointee's background check has to clear. She further explained that the recent issue with Mr. Moreno's appointment was that the chairman of the Ethics Commission resigned and there was a disconnect between her office and the Ethics Commission in the approval of appointments that weren't getting to her office.

Council member Banta asked Mr. Moreno if he was aware that there is a lot going on in the city where the Planning & Zoning Commission is involved. He commented that the public that attend the meetings often are in opposition to an application and it can get tough at times. He asked if he would be able to handle the issues that come forward. Mr. Moreno said yes.

Council member Banta questioned Mr. Moreno what he would do if Tiago's Bar came up before the Planning & Zoning Commission and if he would abstain from voting on the matter. Mr. Moreno's response was that he would do what was right for the city.

Council member Halstead mentioned the 8-24 Referrals that the P&Z Commission have to approve for residential and commercial properties. He questioned if Mr. Moreno would approve the referral based on city planning from a zoning perspective. Mr. Moreno replied that he would.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BANTA MOVED TO APPROVE**

**** CO-CHAIR SWAIN SECONDED**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

***Consent calendar**

45-13 State Reimbursement of Low and Moderate Income Housing for the grand list of 2012.

Veronica Jones, Tax Collector stated that this item pertained to a program that is funded through the state. She explained that program pays a certain portion of the tax and the entity has to provide a tax statement to pay the difference.

Co-chair Vizzo-Paniccia asked Ms. Jones to give more details about the program, in terms of the how and why related to the specific corporation/entity. Ms. Jones explained there are a total of five (5) low income housing sites as follow: Sycamore Garden; First

Baptist Co-op; Cedar Park; Seaview Gardens and Unity Heights. She noted that Lyon Terrace has pulled out from participating in the program.

Ms. Jones went on to say that the contract is between the entity and the city for a certain number of years. The process involves the disbursement of a specific amount and for the amount that isn't paid by the city; they have a contract with the entity to pay the amount of the difference that is set forth in the contract.

Council member Feliciano asked how a site is chosen for the program. Ms. Jones said the site is chosen through the Office of Planning and Economic Development (OPED). Co-chair Vizzo-Paniccia added that there is an application process the entity has to go through based on income levels and other guidelines; noting the Sycamore Garden situation as an example.

Council member Halstead asked if this was a PILOT agreement with the city. Ms. Jones replied no; noting that this has been a forty year contract that expired in June 2012 – *it was clarified that her office is currently working on last year's contract.* Council member Halstead said that he didn't understand all the details of the contract and he questioned if the taxes were adjusted.

Co-chair Swain asked about the owners of the buildings. She questioned if they receive the first funding pie from the state and the second funding pie from the city. She further questioned if it's the owner's responsibility to report who is living in the building. She went on to question if there was anything in place to protect the residents to ensure that they're not overpaying in accordance with the owner who sets the amount that the residents pay. Ms. Jones stated that the amount paid is mandated by the state and it's up to the owner to report what the tenant is paying.

Council member Halstead speculated that the owners of the buildings aren't really paying taxes, because they receive Section-8 payments.

Council member Banta asked if they could table the item due to the questions that were being asked. Co-chair Vizzo-Paniccia responded that they couldn't table the item, because the committee needed to pass the item tonight. due to the time constraint in accordance with the state and federal guidelines level. She noted that the matter was before the committee only as a formality.

Co-chair Swain asked Co-chair Vizzo-Paniccia to clarify why the item was on the agenda. Co-chair Vizzo-Paniccia stated that the item required approval due to the state mandate.

Council member Salter questioned if the Section-8 monies in fact come the way to the building owners as mentioned by Council member Halstead. Ms. Jones said she had no way of knowing if the Section-8 matter is owner or tenant related.

Council member Salter questioned if the item should also go before the Contracts Committee. Co-chair Vizzo-Paniccia replied that the initial portion of the contract would generally go through the Contracts Committee.

Council member Salter asked if the program was receiving funding from the state. Ms. Jones said the funding aspect is the tax abatement. She explained that they receive the physical money from the state and the city abates it.

Council member Feliciano asked what the timeline was for approval of the item. Co-chair Vizzo-Paniccia stated that in the past, the item has always been approved when it was brought forward. She explained that if it's not approved and tabled; other funding will be held up. Ms. Jones added that the goal is to complete the process by April 15, 2014.

Council member Banta relayed that he would like more information. He emphasized that he needed more information regarding the state's portion involved. He asked if he would be able to abstain from the vote for lack of knowledge. Co-chair Vizzo-Paniccia said no, noting that an abstention would need to be for a personal conflict with the entity or a financial gain conflict.

Co-chair Vizzo-Paniccia relayed that the committee members would have two weeks to obtain additional information on their own and review it before the next city council meeting. She said they should forward their questions to her and Co-chair Swain who will respond before the next council meeting.

Co-chair Vizzo-Paniccia further clarified that even if they delay the meeting another month after the additional information is received; it will still push the matter back another two months. She suggested that one option would be to recess the meeting and schedule a special meeting at 5:30 pm on the night of the next scheduled city council meeting on April 7.

Co-chair Swain asked Ms. Jones if she had a synopsis of the programs for distribution to the full city council. Ms. Jones clarified that her department only executes the program and other details of the program are implemented by OPED. Co-chair Vizzo-Paniccia stated that she will forward the committee's questions to Bill Coleman's office/OPED.

1st Motion

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BANTA MOVED TO PASS THE ITEM ONTO THE CITY COUNCIL CONTINGENT UPON THE INFORMATION REQUESTED AND SUBMITTED TO THE CITY COUNCIL PRIOR TO THE NEXT SCHEDULED CITY COUNCIL MEETING ON APRIL 7, 2014**

****The motion was rescinded upon clarification from Co-chair Vizzo-Paniccia that the motion wasn't to approve the item.***

2nd Motion

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BANTA MOVED TO APPROVE
** COUNCIL MEMBER FELICIANO SECONDED
** MOTION PASSED WITH THREE VOTES IN FAVOR AND ONE VOTE IN OPPOSITION (COUNCIL MEMBER HALSTEAD)
*Not on consent calendar**

52-13 Refund of Excess Payments.

Veronica Jones explained what was involved in the refund. She said the seller paid two installments and the buyer paid one installment, which resulted in an overpayment of \$20,000 that should go back to the seller. She further explained that there are generally two installments made during July and January; one from the buyer and the attorney paid on behalf of the seller. Therefore, it created a duplicate payment.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER FELICIANO MOVED TO APPROVE
** COUNCIL MEMBER HALSTEAD SECONDED
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY
*Consent calendar**

Informational Session with Erin McDonough, Special Projects Manager, CAO's Office re: Discussion and Explanation on the process of how appointments are made to the Boards and Committees and request for an updated list of all committees, their members, what each committee is, description, appointed and expiration dates, and attendance lists.

Erin McDonough reviewed the information that was contained in the booklet she distributed. She highlighted the following points below:

Co-chair Vizzo-Paniccia recapped that the information was previously requested and she noted that she passed it onto Council President McCarthy to follow up for possible implementation. She referred to the booklet that she stated should be referenced for new appointments to boards, committees and commissions.

Ms. McDonough stated that going forward; she would email individual appointments for boards, committees and commission. She polled the committee members to ask how many of them have served on a board or commission in the past.

She continued to review the appointments details and stated that each board has its own set of rules, number of members, term of appointment and the requirement to have some professional experience to serve on the board.

- She further noted that the appointee can't be a current state representative and that all board members must be a City of Bridgeport resident.
- She went on to review the process as it was outlined in the booklet that included the review of the disclosure form and the background check through Internal Affairs. She added that the Mayor needs to sign off on the final appointment.
- The appointment then goes before the Ethics Commission.
- A tax background check is conducted.
- The appointment goes before the City Council first for referral to the Miscellaneous Matters Committee or Public Safety & Transportation Committee and then back to the City Council for approval and onto the Mayor for final approval.
- For reappointments, the member can continue to serve on the board until they are replaced or when there is a reappointment – *it's the same process that applies for the initial appointment process that is outlined in the charter.*
- There are specific requirements for minority representation that should be two-thirds of a non-affiliated party; for example: if it's a four member board, only three of the members can be democrats and the other appointee should be from a non-affiliated party – *the board or commission can't be representative solely of only one political party.* Co-chair Vizzo-Paniccia commented that representation should be balanced.

Co-chair Vizzo-Paniccia asked about the date-of-birth detail on the application and whether or not it was supposed to be removed or deleted. Ms. McDonough said that information was included background purposes for the Ethics Commission review.

Ms. McDonough explained the quorum process, noting that it takes time to find a person that is looking to volunteer to serve on a board, committee or commission.

Co-chair Vizzo-Paniccia suggested to the committee that they make a copy of the board descriptions to give to someone that might be interested in serving.

Co-chair Vizzo-Paniccia asked about the process for appointments to the Library Board. Ms. McDonough clarified that the Library Board appoints the Library Board members – *outlined in the booklet*. She noted that they should be contacted for more information.

Co-chair Vizzo-Paniccia asked the committee if they wanted more time to review the information and have Ms. McDonough return for another meeting.

Council member Feliciano thanked Ms. McDonough for the information she provided, noting that it was a great source of reference.

Ms. McDonough stated that the appointment process is a good way to weed out people that may have difficulty submitting or completing an application on time, noting that that might be an indication that they aren't the right candidate to serve on a board.

Co-chair Vizzo-Paniccia noted that she would supply the booklets to the other council members.

ADJOURNMENT

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BANTA MOVED TO ADJOURN**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER FELCIANO SECONDED**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

The meeting adjourned at 7:40 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane Graham
Telesco Secretarial Services